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Leshen in the *Wiedźmin: Gra Wyobraźni* by Jarosław Musiał

A **leshy** (Polish: *Leszy*, in English sometimes spelled *Leshii*, *Leszi*, or *Lessun*), also known as a **leshen** or **spriggan** in CD PROJEKT RED's *The Witcher* franchise, is a forest monster that is described as something that "lives only to kill". When they kill something or someone, they do not leave much for any carrion eaters.

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Quick Answers

▶ **What is the significance of a Leshy in The Witcher franchise?**

▶ **How does one find their path again after encountering a Leshy?**

- **What is the behavior of a Leshy towards carrion eaters?**
- **What is the difference between a Leshy and a Leshen in mythology?**
- **What is the connection between a Leshy and a Wendigo in Witcher 3?**

Wiedźmin: Gra Wyobraźni

In *Wiedźmin: Gra Wyobraźni*, leshy is described as a forest-dwelling, iron-resistant, highly intelligent monster. For unknown reasons, many peasants consider him to be a spirit that protects the forest. In reality, it is a very dangerous creature that hunts woodland creatures and lone wanderers. It has the ability to polymorph.

In its natural form, it is a wildcat-sized creature that looks like a cross between a wildcat and a bear, with mighty fangs and sharp claws. It mostly lurks among the tree branches, from which it quickly jumps on its victims. It usually devours the whole prey. Its mightiest weapon is the ability to shift shape. It can morph into a humanoid being that looks like a harmless, old man or into a tree branch that is practically identical to real ones.

Reasons of State

In this graphic novel for *The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings*, Geralt of Rivia starts his adventure by getting a contract on an ancient leshy from the castellan Lazare, but the monster later turns out to be something else.

The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt

Leshen

Information

Class

Relict

Variations

Ancient leshen
Kernun
Woodland Spirit

Occurrence

Velen
Skellige
Kaer Morhen

Immunity

Axii

Susceptibility

Dimeritium bomb
Relict oil
Igni

Tactics

Controlling surrounding animals and plants; temporarily disappearing.

Loot

Fiber
Leshen mutagen
Leshen resin
Monster bone
Timber
Powdered monster tissue

Leshens in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* are ancient and powerful forest spirits. Possessing a deer skull as a head and tree-like limbs, a leshen can call for aid from crows or a pack of wolves.

A bestiary entry can be obtained by reading The Heart of the Wilds, but the book never appears during gameplay.

Official website description

Humans have long been fascinated by the wild wood — living in its vicinity was the source of tales about creatures ferocious and benign, friendly and hostile. As they started to settle deeper and deeper into the forests, respect for the unknown diminished. Lumber

was gathered, stone abodes were built. As the pestilence that was humanity grew bigger, so did the forest's and its inhabitants' wrath.

At the heart of the forest lies a secret. In a place born of darkness and primeval nature, resides a mighty and terrifying guardian. Immune to human steel, it is believed the leshen is nature's way of protecting the forest and the animals that live within it from the threat humans started to pose upon their ravaging expansion deeper into the lands.

Along with the animals it commands, the leshen became a force to be reckoned with. Sometimes worshipped, this creature can heal other woodland animals and summon nekkers or crows to protect the forest. Its attacks are slow, but deadly — be cautious not to get shackled by its underground roots.

Bestiary entry

We never hunt in these woods. Never. Even if it means the whole village starves.
– Mulliver, ealdorman of Hoshberg in lower Aedirn

Leshens dwell in dense, primeval woods. Fiercely territorial creatures, they hunt with stealth and cunning as their only companions. They use their inborn magic to control the plants and animals within their territory – and so, when stalking them, half the battle is merely getting near enough to strike. Leshens old enough to earn the appellation "ancient" wield advanced skills and tactics that make them particularly dangerous.

Unobtainable without reading the book:
In some areas of the world these creatures form the center of local cults. Peasants living near their woods make offerings to them, usually of hares and birds, though human blood is not unheard of. This fact has given rise to many legends about helpful leshens chasing game towards hunters, helping lost travelers find their way in the forest or saving them from bandits. Sadly, these tales do not have an ounce of truth in them. Leshens see men only as sources of energy on which to feed. They will drain the life force of those who live nearby until only limpid husks remain.

Some leshens create magic totems that increase their strength – in such cases these totems should be destroyed before or while fighting them. Furthermore, some leshens can create for themselves a kind of immortality in the following way: the leshen wounds a lost traveler passing through its woods with its claws and casts a black magic curse on him. For as long as the individual marked in this way stays near its territory, the leshen will be reborn every time it dies. Such leshens can only be defeated by driving them away or killing the person they have marked.

In combat leshens use not only their long claws but also their many allies: wolves, who unfailingly answer their call, or ravens, which harass and distract the leshen's opponent. Leshens are also able to bend plant life to their will and make it aid them in battle. It is a witcher's good fortune that leshens do have one weakness - they are extremely vulnerable to the Igni Sign.

Combat tactics

Leshens do not fight alone. They can summon swarms of crows to distract and harass their enemies, and even call upon wolves to fight with them. They seem to prefer nighttime and darker underground areas.

When facing a leshen, watch for them to dig their rootlike arms into the ground. This is a sign that they are commanding the roots to strike. This attack has surprising range, does heavy damage, hits a reasonably sized area and can only be foiled by rolling away from it. Leshens are slow but powerful melee fighters, and can cause serious injury if allowed. Dodge or roll away from the swipes of their claws.

They also have the ability to turn into a "smoke form"; they will raise both arms above their head and with a swirl of dark smoke, disappear. Note while doing this any attacks on them will be at least partially reflected, and will break Quen. Moon Dust bombs can prevent them from transforming despite the bestiary not listing it as one of theirs weaknesses.

They have been seen to be very, very vulnerable to a series of Fast Attacks and will, without fail, go into Smoke form after taking 4 or 5 hits. This will also teleport them to a random location but they will stay in smoke form which is openly visible as a small moving cloud of swirling smoke, and attacking it does no damage until they appear. They won't attack while in smoke form, but once they rematerialize they will immediately attack.

Igni, and any bombs that can potentially cause fire damage, such as Dragon's Dream, are useful against leshens. While a leshen burns, it will be unable to defend itself.

Associated quests

- Abandoned Sawmill
- A Dark Legacy
- The Secret Life of Count Romilly

The Witcher Adventure Game

Leshen can cross your path in *The Witcher Adventure Game*. This creature is very hard to defeat, level Gold.

To defeat them you need:

- Sword:5
- Shield:0

Successful Sword: Receive 2 VP.

Failed Sword: Suffer 1 Death for each Sword you are short.

Gwent: The Witcher Card Game

Reward Tree entries: Woodland Spirit

***Scroll 1**: Experienced hunters can hide from most dangerous woodland beasts, be they wolves, nekkers, even ekimmaras. But there is no hiding from a leshen.*

***Scroll 2**: It is impossible to conceal one's tracks from a leshen. They cannot be fooled. At one moment, the forest stands still and empty... Then, out of nowhere, staring back at you from the darkness is a pair of dead, hollow eye sockets, burning with an unearthly blue flame.*

***Scroll 3**: Although its claws measure three feet long and are sharper than a Mahakaman sihil, they are not what is to be feared most. The forest – that is a leshen's most dangerous weapon. It can be brought to life and bent to the monster's will.*

***Scroll 4**: Tree roots sprout from underfoot, tangling and gripping your legs. The air thickens with dense fog, obscuring the pack of wolves now on your scent. It is extremely*

difficult to survive such an attack, and even more difficult to retain your sanity after the fact.

***Chest 1**: In some regions of the world, cults are formed around leshens. They are offered sacrifices, usually in the form of hares and birds, but sometimes human blood. Many legends have emerged of benevelont leshens that help hunters find prey, guide wayward travelers to safety, even rescue folk from bandit raids. Unfortunately, not a shred of truth can be found in such myths. In fact, leshes see humans as just another source of energy – a source for which their appetites continue to grow.*

***Chest 2**: For years, scholars have debated the true nature of leshens. Although most bestiaries categorize them as relicts, many experts question this classification. Some consider them a being born of black magic, perhaps even necromancy. Others contend that they are demons, akin to djinns or draugs. Autopsies of leshen corpses would undoubtedly shed light on the dispute. However, once slain, its body vanishes... All that remains is of the creature is a yellowed deer skull...*

***Chest 3**: What should one do upon encountering a leshen? Fighting it is out of the question – unless you are an experienced witcher, of course. Naturally, the first instinct would be to flee. Unfortunately, leshens can move between trees at the speed of the wind, making escape nearly impossible. So what is the alternative? Hunters, druids, and elves all agree – any traveler who stumbles upon a leshen should fall to his knees without delay, draw a blade over his wrists, and close his eyes. If fortune smiles upon him, the leshen will be satisfied with the gift of blood and leave the traveler be... And perhaps his wounds can be healed before it is too late.*

Thronebreaker: The Witcher Tales

A Leshen is encountered during the quest The Guardian of Ruewode, and additional information on the entity is given before the encounter, along with its scientific name:

The monster encountered by the Lyrians in Ruewode is known to the simple folk as a "leshen". They believe it defends against those who too greedily harvest nature's bounty, Of course, the scholars of Oxenfurt argue this is nonsense, and that a leshen, or rather Silvanus Agilis, is simply one of the many post-Conjunction beings. In truth, it did not matter to Meve who was right...

Trivia

- The Leshy is a tutelary deity of the forests in pagan Slavic mythology.
  The Leshy is masculine and humanoid in shape, is able to assume any likeness and can change in size and height. He is sometimes portrayed with horns and surrounded by packs of wolves and bears. In some accounts, Leshy is described as having a wife (Leshachikha) and children (leshonki, leszonky). He is known by some to have a propensity to lead travelers astray and abduct children (which he shares with Chort, the "Black One"), which would lead some to believe he is an evil entity.

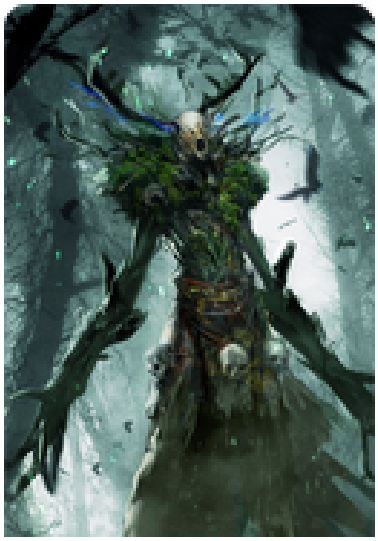
- The term "leshy" comes from the Slavic term for "forest" ("les").
- A Leshen appears in the game *Monster Hunter: World* by Capcom, along with Nekkers and Geralt himself.

Gallery

Leshen in *The Witcher: House of Glass*

Leshen in a promo shot

Leshy on early screenshot (2013)



Gwent card art

Mutated Leshy in Netflix's *The Witcher*

The Witcher 3 bestiary in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*

Beast

Base Game	• Bear • Dog • Wolf
Hearts of Stone	Wild boar
Blood and Wine	• Big Bad Wolf • Panther • The Beast of Beauclair • Three Little Pigs

Cursed one

Base Game	• Berserker • Botchling • Lubberkin • Ulfhedinn • Werewolf
Hearts of Stone	The Toad Prince
Blood and Wine	Archespore

Draconid

Base Game	• Basilisk • Cockatrice • Forktail • Royal wyvern • Shrieker • The Dragon of Fyresdal • Wyvern
Blood and Wine	• Silver Basilisk • Slyzard • Slyzard Matriarch

Elementa

Base Game	• Djinn • Earth Elemental • Fire Elemental • Gargoyle • Golem • Hounds of the Wild Hunt • Ice Elemental • The Apiarian Phantom • Therazane
Blood and Wine	• Moreau's Golem • Pixies

Hybrid

Base Game	• Ekhidna • Erynia • Griffin • Harpy • Melusine • Opinicus • Salma • Siren • Succubus

Insectoid

Base Game	• Arachas • Armoured arachas • Endrega drone • Endrega warrior • Endrega worker • Harrisi • Venomous arachas
Hearts of Stone	Arachnomorphs
Blood and Wine	• Giant centipede • Kikimore • Kikimore worker • Pale Widow

Necrophage

Base Game	• Abaya • Alghoul • Devourer • Drowner • Drowned dead • Foglet • Ghoul • Grave hag • Ignis Fatuus • Mourntart • Mucknixer • Rotfiend • Water hag
Blood and Wine	• Scurvers • Spotted wight • Wight

Ogroid

Base Game	• Cyclops • Hagubman • Ice giant • Ice troll • Nekker • Rock troll • Wham-a-Wham
Blood and Wine	• Cloud Giant • Golyat

Relict

Base Game	• Chort • Crones • Doppler • Fiend • Fugas • Godling • Howler • Imp • Kernun • Leshen • Morvudd • Sylvan • Woodland Spirit
Hearts of Stone	The Caretaker
Blood and Wine	• Grottore • Shaelmaar • Shaelmaar from the Emperor of Nilfgaard • Spriggan • The Monster of Tufo • Wicked Witch

Specter

Base Game	• Devil by the Well • Hym • Jenny o' the Woods • Nightwraith • Noonwraith • Penitent • Plague maiden • Red Miasmal • The White Lady • Wraith
Hearts of Stone	• Ethereal • The Wraith from the Painting
Blood and Wine	• Barghest • Banshee • Daphne's Wraith • Longlocks • Phantom of the Amphitheater • Umbra

Vampire	
Base Game	• Ekimmara • Higher Vampire • Gael • Katakan • Sarasti
Blood and Wine	• Alpha Garkain • Alp • Bruxa • Dettlaff van der Eretein • Fleder • Garkain • Protofleder • The Bruxa of Corvo Bianco